Digital world in the age of online education

Much attention has recently been devoted to the dangers of children's excessive use of digital devices and the Internet. Parents have expressed doubts about the use of new technologies in education. However, these tools become part of school realities, the robotics or computer science classes, online contact with teachers, through e-mail correspondence. New technologies in education have developed quite dynamically and were more or less needed. The regulation of 20 March 2020 made using them an obligatory two-way medium and the only possible form of communication between the teacher and the student.

1.   Age of the child and use of mobile devices

Parents very often have doubts about when to allow their children to use digital devices. They are looking for reliable sources of information and guidelines, unfortunately, these change every year, due to the dynamics of the development of new technologies and the equally dynamic development of young people. It is worth remembering that recommendations are standardized and not personalized. Therefore, the development phase and the individual nature of the circumstances should be taken into account when deciding on the child's participation in the digital world.

Most experts advise that **toddler up to 3 years old** do not use mobile devices at all. Educational programs aimed at children under 3 years old have questionable cognitive value, as children they do not transfer the perception of digital images to a pool of experiences in the real world. For children between **3 and 6 years old,** it is recommended to use mobile devices a maximum of 20 minutes per day. Research confirms that even interactive programs (more effective than passive viewing) are not as effective as experiences and interactions in the real world. **For 6- up to 9-years-olds,** we can extend this time by adapting to the needs and psychophysical abilities of the child. This is the moment when a child enters school life, which very often involves receiving his first phone. This is particularly important now that teaching takes place in remote form, and the use of mobile devices becomes almost daily and, in a sense, the student's duty. Quality of the time spent with the mobile device for your child is more important than quantity.

2.   How do I know if an app or game is suitable for our child?

Once parents decide that a child can use technology, another question arises – which specifically? The problem is not to find and acquire a new application or game, but the challenge may be to choose the right one, taking into account the age of the child, their needs and development opportunities. In online stores, all games and applications have markings specifying the age group to which the proposed content is intended.

In Poland we have the European System of **PEGI** rating, **Pan European Game Information.** The system was introduced, among other things, to help parents consciously make decisions about acquiring games. Below there are PEGI ratings and a detailed description of the classification. It is worth reviewing this rating before deciding to acquire a new game or app.

Age Ratings

3 — The rating 3 games that might have a bit of violence but no blood no gore online and is suitable for any age. Age ratings games would be for sport or any other game that has a bit of violence. The age ratings could mean the difficulty of the game.

7 — The rating 7 games that would have violence through out the game has online and is suitable for 7 and over there wont be blood or gore because it would be a child's game and the levels of the game would be a bit harder than the age ratings of 3

12 — The rating 12 games would have violence a bit of sex online bad language and is for people who are 12 and over. the game levels would be harder to complete and also they expect people who are the age of 12 to complete the game.

16 — The rating 16 games would have violence with blood fear sex online nudity gambling bad language and is suitable for people who are 16 and over because the people who made the game would expect people who are 16 to understand what's going on in the game and people who might play this game might not understand

18 — The rating 18 games would have sex nudity violence with blood fear online gambling drugs discrimination bad language and is for people who are 18 because the would know what's going on in the game and would understand what's going on

Source: www.pegi.info

3. How to properly use mobile devices

Remote learning is currently obligatory – which means use of computers, tablets or smartphones is necessery.
It is therefore worth remembering the issues related to the proper use of them:

- **Protect your eyes.** Pay attention to keeping the appropriate distance from the screen, that is 30 cm.
- **The screen should not be the only light source in the room.** It is recommended that there is also a second point light, behind the screen with a slightly lower intensity.
- Keep in mind that exposure to light emitted by mobile devices before the bedtime can cause **difficulty falling asleep.**
- **Take care of the spine.** Change positions and seats – on the sofa, on the floor.
- **Remote learning requires proper conditions for your child** – limit external distractors to a positive impact on your level of concentration.

4. Family rules for using mobile devices

In the years 2015-2016, a research was conducted by the University of Gdańsk and the Foundation "Mój Z@sięg" surveying 22,000 people between the age of 12 and 18. The results show that **60.6% of respondents do not have any rules at homes** related to use of smartphones and internet.
Below are simple examples of the principles that can be introduced from now on to the daily life of family. The rules should be established by the whole family. These days particularly, obeying rules in cases of both home office and remote learning are equally important.

- **Do not use digital devices during family meals**,
- **Do not take your smartphone to bed** with you,
- **Share** digital devices to solve problem,
- **It is important for the parents and the children to respect each other's scheduled time for working and learning online.**

5. Monitor time activity

Along with your child, you both can research how much of the time is spent to which activities. Make sure that this is not a way to control your children's use of the device, but **to verify the time allocations between various apps and overall device activity, not excluding parents from this process.** This will make you aware of your child's time spent on your mobile divices. The results can be very rewarding for the child, because it may turn out that a large part of the time spent on a computer, tablet or smartphone your child devotes to remote learning tasks such as: lessons with teachers, homework or seeking answers. Here are some apps that can help you do this:
-Rescue Time is a program that runs in the background on a computer or mobile device; it measures the time spent on individual pages and applications.
-My Minutes is an application that helps you set goals and achieve them regularity; it informs you when the activity is due or when the task has been completed.

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